



Research Abstract

Prevalence of Depression Among Medical Students Of The American International University, West Africa

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ABSTRACT

Background: Depression is one of the major mental disorders experienced by people of various age groups and works of life all over the world. Those in the medical field are not excluded. With the intense training and high level of physical, mental and emotional demands placed on medical students, they tend to become depressed. This not only affects their learning process or overall academic performance; it also affects them professionally in the future, which in turn would lead to compromise in patient care. In The Gambia, there is a lack of data on the prevalence of depression and the impacts it has on medical students. Thus, this study assessed the prevalence of depression among students of the American International University West Africa (AIUWA), The Gambia.

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out among medical students of AIUWA over a two-month period (June to July 2021). A self-structured questionnaire was used to obtain information on socio-demographic characteristics. Diagnosis of depression was assessed using the 9-item Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9). A total of 100 students were included in this study. Data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26.

Results: The overall prevalence of depression among the participants was 36%, with PHQ-9 scores ≥ 10 . With regards to the severity of depression, 26 (26%), 21 (21%), 11 (11%), and 4(4%) students were classified as having mild, moderate, moderately severe, and severe depression respectively. Efficiency of monthly allowance ($p = 0.022$, $\Phi = 0.251$, $V = 0.251$), self-rated academic performance ($p = 0.012$, $\Phi = 0.297$, $V = 0.297$) and prior history of depression ($p = 0.001$, $\Phi = 0.347$, $V = 0.347$), were independently associated with depression.

Conclusion: The prevalence of depression among medical students of the American International University, is high, and is associated with inefficient monthly allowance, consumption of alcohol, average academic performance and prior history of depression. It is recommended that there should be an implementation of a guidance and counseling department within the university.,

Keywords: Depression, Medical Students, AIUWA, University, West Africa

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